

TENNESSEE COMMERCIAL FISHING REGULATION SUMMARY

Effective March 1, 2007 to February 28, 2008

This is not a legal document. It is a summary of Tennessee’s commercial fishing regulations. Detailed information on commercial fishing regulations is available from all TWRA offices (see last page of this summary for contact information) or by visiting www.state.tn.us/twra/. Changes to these regulations and fees may occur at any time.

Commercial Fisher – A commercial fisher is any person who takes or who aids and assists another person in taking fish or other aquatic life from any of the waters, lakes, streams or ponds of this state for pay or for the purpose of sale, barter or exchange. Any person fishing with commercial fishing gear shall be deemed to be a commercial fisher within the meaning of this definition. All persons using fishing tackle or fishing gear other than that permitted to be used by a person having or holding a sport fishing license shall likewise be deemed and considered a commercial fisher within the meaning of this definition.

Commercial Fisher's Helper – A commercial fisher's helper is any person who assists another person in handling fishing gear, operation of motors or any other act of assistance to the commercial fisher while in the vessel with the commercial fisher. A helper's license is issued in the commercial fisher's name. Each commercial fisher must have in their possession a commercial helper’s license for each helper on board the vessel at any time. The helper must work **in the boat** with the commercial fisher whose name is on the helper's license.

Wholesale Fish Dealer – A wholesale fish dealer is any person in the business of buying from a commercial fisher, fish or other edible aquatic life, or parts of fish or other edible aquatic life, or products taken from the waters of the state of Tennessee for the purpose of canning, preserving or processing; or any person in the business of buying from a wholesale fish dealer for the purpose of selling or handling for shipment or sale. Excluded from this definition are restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, retail fish markets, and other businesses that do not buy directly from a commercial fisher and that sell directly to the general public. Each separate place of business shall require a separate license.

Non-Residents – Tennessee does not offer non-resident commercial fishing licenses to residents of states which do not permit the sale of non-resident licenses to residents of Tennessee. Nonresidents residing in states that do not permit the sale of nonresident licenses to residents of Tennessee are prohibited from engaging in the business of a “commercial fisher” (see definition above) in Tennessee.

LICENSES AND PERMITS

Before any person, firm, or corporation shall engage in the business of a “commercial fisher” or “wholesale fish dealer” they shall have in their possession the required licenses and permits. **Commercial fishers and wholesale fish dealers must contact the Fisheries Management Division at (615) 781-6575 within 5 days upon purchasing a license.** Fees for Tennessee’s commercial fishing licenses and permits are as follows:

License/Permit	Fees	
	Resident	Nonresident
Commercial Fishing	\$200	\$1,000
Commercial Fishing Helper	\$200	\$1,000
Commercial Roe Fish Permit, Supplemental*	\$1,000	\$1,500
Commercial Turtle Permit, Supplemental**	FREE	FREE
Wholesale Fish Dealer	\$500	\$500
Wholesale Roe Fish Permit, Supplemental***	\$500	\$1,000

- * Commercial fishers who intend to fish for commercial roe fish must obtain a Commercial Fishing License **and** a Commercial Roe Fish Permit prior to harvesting any part of a paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, or bowfin from Tennessee waters. No more than 80 resident Commercial Roe Fish Permits will be issued each license year. Any person who purchased a Resident Commercial Roe Fish Permit between March 1, 2006, and March 31, 2006, shall have priority to renew the permit in March, 2007, and in each succeeding March thereafter until he/she fails to renew such permit.
- ** Commercial fishers intending to harvest commercial turtles must obtain a Free Commercial Turtle Permit, Supplemental prior to harvesting these species.
- *** Wholesale fish dealers who wish to buy or sell any part of a roe species (paddlefish, sturgeon, and bowfin) must purchase a Wholesale Roe Fish Permit.

WATERS OPEN TO COMMERCIAL FISHING

Refuges – Special regulations on commercial fishing may apply to federal refuges and other areas. Contact the appropriate federal authority for specific regulations for these areas.

Commercial fishing is prohibited within the following refuges: Bean Switch, Hop-In, Maness Swamp, Horns Bluff, Jarrell Switch, Eagle Lake, Lauderdale, Paint Rock, Henderson Island, Kingston, Pardue Pond, Dyson Ditch, Bards Creek, Lick Creek, Hiwassee, Phipps Bend, White Lake, and Lock 5.

Rivers – "River" means that body of water confined within the identifiable banks. At high river stage, oxbows, sloughs, and backwaters accessible by boat from the river are open to commercial fishing, but are considered private waters and may be fished only with permission of landowner.

- CLINCH – commercial fishing authorized only downstream from Melton Hill Dam. Gill and trammel nets prohibited.
- CUMBERLAND - as listed in Reservoir section. Cordell Hull Dam upstream closed.
- EMORY - open from the Harriman Bridge downstream. Gill and trammel nets are prohibited.
- FORKED DEER – commercial fishing authorized except that portion of the Middle Fork lying within the boundaries of the Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge is closed.
- FRENCH BROAD
- HARPETH RIVER – commercial fishing authorized only downstream from State Hwy. 49 Bridge, except that trotlines may be fished upstream of the bridge.
- HATCHIE
- HIWASSEE – commercial fishing authorized only downstream from U.S. 11 Bridge (Charleston).
- HOLSTON
- LOOSAHATCHIE – commercial fishing open only downstream from the new Raleigh-Millington Road Bridge.
- MISSISSIPPI RIVER – commercial fishing open except that portion from the Mississippi-Tennessee line upstream to Mississippi River Mile 745, marked by the upper or northern tip of Hickman Bar is closed. This closure includes McKellar Lake and Wolf River embayments. Wardlow's Pocket and Wardlow's Pocket Chute (except those portions lying within the boundaries of the Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge), Heathright Pocket, Cold Creek, Cold Creek Chute, lying within the boundaries of Anderson Tully WMA in Lauderdale County are open; all other ponds, lakes, arms, sloughs, bayous, and pockets within the WMA are closed. These areas are closed due to the contamination of fish.
- NOLICHUCKY

- OBION
- RED RIVER – commercial fishing authorized only downstream from U.S. Hwy. 41A Bridge, except that trotlines may be fished upstream of the bridge.
- STONES RIVER – commercial fishing closed from confluence with Cumberland River upstream, except that trotlines may be fished upstream of the Cumberland River confluence.
- TENNESSEE - as listed in Reservoir section.
- WOLF - only the section from Germantown Bridge upstream is open to commercial fishing. Gill and trammel nets are prohibited. The section upstream of Bateman Bridge in Fayette County is open for trotlines only. The section from Germantown Bridge downstream to Mississippi River is closed due to chemical pollution.
- DUCK RIVER - That portion of the Duck River from its confluence with Blue Creek at approximately DRM 13.2 downstream to the Hustburg pipeline crossing is open year-round to trotlines, hoop nets, and slat baskets. The Duck River from DRM 4.0 downstream to the Hustburg pipeline crossing at approximate DRM 1.4 is open to entanglement gear (gill nets and trammel nets) from December 1 through January 15. The rest of Duck River downstream is open year-round to all legal commercial gear types. Duck River upstream from its confluence with Blue Creek is closed to all commercial fishing.

Reservoirs – The reservoir boundary for commercial fishing regulations is the full pool elevation unless otherwise specified.

- BARKLEY (Tennessee portion) - 15,900 acres.
- CHEATHAM - 7,450 acres. Commercial fishers must contract with TWRA and abide by the contract provisions as determined by TWRA in order to fish commercially.
- CHEROKEE - 30,200 acres. Open to trotlines, slat baskets, fyke nets and hoop nets year-round. Trammel and gill nets are prohibited. The taking and possession of blue catfish and paddlefish by commercial fishing methods is prohibited.
- CHICKAMAUGA - 34,500 acres.
- DOUGLAS - 30,400 acres. Entanglement gear (gill and trammel nets) and hoop nets are prohibited above Point 14 from January through June. Entanglement gear (gill and trammel nets) is prohibited from the mouth to the headwaters of Indian, McGuire, Muddy and Flat creeks from October through February.
- FORT LOUDOUN - 14,600 acres. The possession of all species of catfish taken by commercial methods from Fort Loudoun Dam upstream to the confluence of the French Broad and Holston rivers is prohibited due to contamination.
- GUNTERSVILLE (Tennessee portion) - 2,170 acres.
- KENTUCKY (Tennessee portion) - 108,040 acre.
 - Commercial fishing gear and sport fishing trotlines prohibited in the New Johnsonville Steamplant Harbor and within 50 yards of the Danville Railroad Bridge dikes (approximate TRM 78.3). All commercial fishing gear except slat baskets and trotlines is prohibited in all creeks from 4 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the months of April and May; all types of commercial fishing gear are permitted in all creeks from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m. daily during the months of April and May, except that whip sets (the driving of fish into trammel and gill nets by the use of noise and disturbing the water) are not permitted in any creeks which have operating commercial docks. All commercial fishing gear is prohibited within 1,000 yards of Pickwick dam.
 - The Duck River embayment from DRM 4.0 upstream to its confluence with Blue Creek at approximately DRM 13.2 is closed year-round to all commercial fishing gear types except trotlines, hoop nets and slat baskets. The Duck River embayment from Hustburg pipeline crossing at approximate DRM 1.4 upstream to DRM 4.0 is closed to commercial fishing with entanglement gear (gill nets and trammel nets) except from December 1 through January 15 each year.
 - Paddlefish harvest and all entanglement type commercial fishing gear with mesh sizes greater than 4 inches is prohibited year-round in the Big Sandy River Embayment (all waters west of a line drawn from

Pace Point to the mouth of Eagle Creek). Additionally, unattended entanglement type commercial fishing gear is prohibited from November 25 through March 15 in waters of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge located within the Big Sandy River Embayment and in all of the waters of the West Sandy Creek Arm of the Big Sandy River Embayment.

- NICKAJACK - 10,800 acres.
- OLD HICKORY - 22,500 acres.
 - Trammel and gill nets are prohibited from Highway 231 upstream to the Cordell Hull Dam, including the Caney Fork River.
 - Trammel and gill nets prohibited from Highway 109 upstream to 231 except fishing of legal entanglement nets by whipset or trammeling method are permitted by contract with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. For information on obtaining a contract, write TWRA Region II Office at P.O. Box 41489, Nashville, TN 37204 or phone 1-800-624-7406.
- PICKWICK (Tennessee portion) - 6,160 acres.
- REELFOOT - 10,000 acres. The taking of grass carp (*C. idella*) is prohibited.
- WATTS BAR - 38,600 acres. Trammel and gill nets are prohibited.
- JOHN SEVIER - 811 acres.
- DAVY CROCKETT (Greene County) - 797 acres.

COMMERCIAL FISHING GEAR

Legal gear types are trotlines, slat baskets, hoop nets, fyke nets, trap nets, pound nets, trammel nets, gill nets, seines, cast nets and turtle traps.

Hoop nets, fyke nets, trap nets and pound nets with a mesh size of one (1) inch or smaller on the square may only be fished during the months of October, November, December, January, February, March and April, except, the Mississippi River, where they may be fished year-round.

- **Cast Net** – A cast net is defined as a net having a maximum radius of ten (10) feet and a mesh size (square measure) of not less than one-fourth (1/4) inch and not greater than one (1) inch.
- **Fish Seine** – A fish seine consists of a float and lead line to which netting is attached. The netting of the seine shall be constructed of twine not smaller than Number 7 nylon or synthetic fiber or Number 9 cotton or linen. The mesh size of seines shall be three (3) inches or larger on the square. Seines must be constantly attended, and may not be fished in a stationary manner. These seines may be fished in private waters and in waters which are replenished by overflows from the Mississippi, Tennessee, Obion, Hatchie, Wolf, Loosahatchie, and Forked Deer rivers, but which, during the dry season of the year, have no outlet to these rivers. Fish seines as defined here may also be used in the dewatering areas of Kentucky Lake.
- **Fyke Net, Trap Net, and Pound Net** – A fyke net, also known as a wing net, is a hoop net to which as many as three (3) wings or leads may be attached. Trap nets or pound nets which have rectangular or box shaped traps shall also be legal by this definition. The wings or leads are equipped with floats and sinkers, and the webbing of the wings shall be constructed of twine not smaller than Number 7 in nylon or Number 9 in cotton or linen. The maximum length of each wing is 50 feet. The legal mesh size of fyke nets and wings or leads is one (1) inch or smaller or three (3) inches or larger on the square.
- **Gill Net** – A gill net is defined as a single net attached to float and lead lines. Gill nets must have a minimum mesh size of three (3) inches on the square or greater. Gill nets with square mesh greater than 4.0 and less than 6.0 inches are prohibited except on the Mississippi River where square mesh greater than 4.0 and less than 5.0 inches are prohibited. The maximum length of a gill net is three hundred (300) yards. Gill nets must be fished in a stationary manner except in the Mississippi River. A net may not be hobbled to less than two thirds the height of the net.

- **Trammel Net** – A trammel net is defined as a net having three (3) webs (nets) hung to a single top (float) and bottom (lead) line. The two outside webs are called walling, and the inside web is called webbing. The inside webbing shall have a mesh size of not less than three (3) inches on the square. Webbing with square mesh greater than 4.0 inches and less than 6.0 inches is prohibited except on the Mississippi River where webbing with square mesh greater than 4.0 inches and less than 5.0 inches is prohibited. The outside walling shall have a mesh size of not less than six (6) inches on the square. The maximum mesh size of the outside walling shall consist of vertical ties or hobbles on each side of the webbing at six (6) foot intervals along the float and lead line. A net may not be hobbled to less than two thirds the height of the net. Maximum length of a trammel net is three hundred (300) yards. Trammel nets must be fished in a stationary manner except in the Mississippi River.
- **Hoop Net** – A barrel shaped net made of synthetic cotton, linen, or nylon and supported by hoops. A hoop net is also known as a barrel net, set net, funnel net, and trap net. One or more throats are attached inside the hoop structure. Legal mesh size of hoop nets is one (1) inch or smaller or three (3) inches or larger on the square. This definition applies to all waters except the Mississippi River.
- **Slat Basket** – A slat basket is defined as a device used for taking non-game or commercial fish only. Slat baskets may have only one outside funnel opening, and may be made of wood, plastic, or cane slats or splits which are placed lengthwise and constructed so that there must be a minimum of four openings, each being at least 1 ½" wide and 6" long, in the catching area.
- **Trotline** – A main line with drop lines to which single hooks are attached and baited in order to catch fish. Such drops must not be closer than 24 inches to each other.
- **Turtle Traps** – A turtle trap is defined as a trap made of linen or cotton netting, wood or cane slats or strips, wire, or other similar materials with a minimum mesh size of three (3) inches on the square. Such traps must be constructed in a way as to permit the escape of fish through the three (3) inch openings. Turtle traps as defined herein may be used in all commercial waters. Turtle traps must be set so that a portion of the catching area is positioned above the water.
- **Dip Net** – A dip net is a net constructed from natural or synthetic fibers, which is attached to a frame that is attached to a pole. A dip net may only be used to commercially harvest turtles from Reelfoot Wildlife Management Area.

Regulations Concerning Use of Commercial Gear

No commercial fishing gear may be fished within 100 yards of the mouth of any river, creek, slough, inlet, or outlet, nor shall any commercial fishing gear be set so as to extend more than three-quarters (3/4) across any stream, river, chute, or embayment.

Commercial fishing gear is prohibited within 1,000 yards downstream of any TVA or Corps of Engineers Dam or within 300 yards of any commercial boat dock or resort. For enforcement purposes, wingwalls and lock walls are considered to be part of the "dam", and measurements will be made from their downstream end.

Gill nets, trammel nets, turtle traps, and trotlines must be run at least once every 24-hour period. Other types of commercial fishing gear (slat baskets, hoop nets, fyke nets, trap nets, and pound nets) must be run at least once every 72-hour period.

Each piece of commercial fishing gear, including trotlines fished commercially, shall be marked with a tag securely fastened to the head end of the line or net or to the float. The tag should measure 1 inch by 3

inches or larger. The name and current license number of the commercial fisher using the gear must be on the tag. Tags may be made from metal, plastic, or other non-degradable material. The commercial fisher must furnish the tags.

The possession and/or use of any type of gear, which is not specifically authorized by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission, or which is not properly licensed, is forbidden. No commercial gear may be possessed on, or immediately adjacent to, any body of water where such gear is not authorized.

FISHES AND OTHER AQUATIC LIFE WHICH MAY BE TAKEN

The following fish species may be taken and sold commercially year-round unless otherwise restricted by proclamation, rule, or statute:

Common Name	Scientific Name
④ ⑤ Shovelnose sturgeon	<i>Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus</i> (Rafinesque)
① ④ Paddlefish	<i>Polyodon spathula</i> (Walbaum)
Spotted gar	<i>Lepisosteus oculatus</i> (Winchell)
Longnose gar	<i>Lepisosteus osseus</i> (Linnaeus)
Shortnose gar	<i>Lepisosteus platostomus</i> (Rafinesque)
④ Bowfin	<i>Amia calva</i> (Linnaeus)
Skipjack herring	<i>Alosa chrysochloris</i> (Rafinesque)
Gizzard shad	<i>Dorosoma cepedianum</i> (Lesueur)
Threadfin shad	<i>Dorosoma petenense</i> (Guenther)
Grass carp	<i>Ctenopharyngodon idella</i> (Valenciennes)
Common carp	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i> (Linnaeus)
③ Silver carp	<i>Hypophthalmichthys molitrix</i> (Valenciennes)
③ Bighead carp	<i>Hypophthalmichthys nobilis</i> (Richardson)
River carpsucker	<i>Carpionodes carpio</i> (Rafinesque)
Quillback	<i>Carpionodes cyprinus</i> (Lesueur)
White sucker	<i>Catostomus commersoni</i> (Lacepede)
Smallmouth buffalo	<i>Ictiobus bubalus</i> (Rafinesque)
Bigmouth buffalo	<i>Ictiobus cyprinellus</i> (Valenciennes)
Black buffalo	<i>Ictiobus niger</i> (Rafinesque)
Spotted sucker	<i>Minytrema melanops</i> (Rafinesque)
Silver redhorse	<i>Moxostoma anisurum</i> (Rafinesque)
Golden redhorse	<i>Moxostoma erythrurum</i> (Rafinesque)
Black bullhead	<i>Ameiurus melas</i> (Rafinesque)
Yellow bullhead	<i>Ameiurus natalis</i> (Lesueur)
Brown bullhead	<i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i> (Lesueur)
① ② Blue catfish	<i>Ictalurus furcatus</i> (Lesueur)
② Channel catfish	<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i> (Rafinesque)
② Flathead catfish	<i>Pylocictis olivaris</i> (Rafinesque)
Freshwater drum	<i>Aplodinotus grunniens</i> (Rafinesque)
Yellow bass	<i>Morone mississippiensis</i> (Jordan, Eigenmannn)

- ① The taking and possession of blue catfish and paddlefish from Cherokee Reservoir by commercial fishing methods is prohibited.
- ② All catfish greater than 34 inches must be released immediately statewide. No catfish less than eight (8) inches in length may be kept alive.
- ③ Silver carp and bighead carp are Class V animals and therefore may not be possessed alive by commercial fishers.
- ④ Special regulations apply for all commercial roe fish species (paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, and bowfin). See section titled “Commercial Roe Fish Regulations” for a synopsis of these regulations.
- ⑤ The taking and possession of pallid:shovelnose sturgeon hybrids is prohibited. Any sturgeon that is not a pure shovelnose sturgeon must be released immediately.

Any wildlife accidentally taken in connection with a commercial operation under commercial fishing regulations shall be quickly and carefully released with the least possible injury.

It is unlawful for a commercial fisher to possess, while engaging in commercial fishing, any species of fish which cannot legally be taken with commercial fishing gear, except for legally taken bream less than four inches (4") in length which may be used as bait.

Fish and turtles classified as endangered, threatened, or in need of management as proclaimed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission may not be taken. These include but are not limited to: lake sturgeon, pallid sturgeon, alligator gar, blue sucker, highfin carpsucker, harelip sucker, blackfin sucker, alligator snapping turtle, and bog turtle.

Possession of commercial fishing gear on, or immediately adjacent to, any waters closed due to contamination, or in possession of any species of fish, turtle or other aquatic animal life taken from the waters closed to that species due to contamination is punishable as a Class A misdemeanor. Additionally, such person shall be prohibited from engaging in commercial fishing for not less than three (3) years.

ROE FISH REGULATIONS

Licenses and Permits – Commercial fishers who intend to fish for commercial roe fish must obtain a Commercial Fishing License **and** a Commercial Roe Fish Permit prior to harvesting any part of a paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, or bowfin from Tennessee waters. A valid Wholesale Fish Dealer’s License **and** a valid Wholesale Roe Fish Permit are required to buy, hold, or sell any part of a paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, or bowfin in Tennessee. Paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, or bowfin (or parts thereof) harvested from Tennessee waters must be marketed to a licensed wholesale fish dealer.

Seasons – See table below for open and closed periods for commercial roe fish:

Species	Open Season	Closed Period
Paddlefish	Statewide: Nov. 15 to April 7 Mississippi River: Nov. 15 to April 15	Statewide: April 8 to Nov. 14 Mississippi River: April 16 to Nov. 14
Shovelnose Sturgeon	October 15 to May 15	May 16 to October 14
Bowfin	Year round	None

Paddlefish and sturgeon or parts thereof (which include their eggs and flesh) may not be taken during closed periods, nor shall they be possessed during these periods unless they were previously taken during a legal taking season. Those persons possessing paddlefish or sturgeon or parts thereof during closed periods must have in their possession receipts denoting pounds of flesh or eggs (or both if applicable) in their possession, name and address of supplier/fisher, name of water body from which product was harvested and date of harvest or date obtained.

Minimum Size Limits – Paddlefish harvested from the Mississippi River must be 34 inches or larger from the eye to the fork of the tail to be legal for harvest. Minimum eye to fork length limits for all other Tennessee waters vary by season. Paddlefish must meet or exceed these minimum eye to fork length limits to be legal for harvest from Tennessee waters (except the Mississippi River):

Season	Minimum Eye to Fork Length Limit
November 15, 2006 to April 7, 2007	36 inches
November 15, 2007 to April 7, 2008	37 inches
November 15, 2008 to April 7, 2009	38 inches
November 15, 2009 to April 7, 2010	38 inches

Shovelnose sturgeon must be larger than 24 inches and smaller than 32 inches from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail to be legal for harvest. Paddlefish less than the appropriate minimum eye to fork length limit and shovelnose sturgeon smaller than 24 inches or greater than 32 inches must be returned immediately to the water. Prior to sale to an in-state wholesale fish dealer's business or prior to being marketed out-of-state, paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon carcasses may not be altered in a manner that the length of the fish can not be measured (eye to fork length or block length for paddlefish and snout to fork length for shovelnose sturgeon).

Blocking – Paddlefish larger than the appropriate minimum eye to fork length limit can be blocked (with the tail remaining on the fish) prior to sale if the fish also meets the appropriate minimum block length (as measured along side of the fish from the fork of the tail to the edge of the skin behind the gill arch) limit. The minimum block length limit for each minimum eye to fork length limit is reported in the table below.

If the Minimum Eye to Fork Length Limit is:	...then the Minimum Block Length Limit is:
34 inches	25 inches
36 inches	27 inches
37 inches	27 inches
38 inches	28 inches
40 inches	30 inches

Other Regulations – Paddlefish may not be possessed alive away from the harvested waters. Any paddlefish and/or shovelnose sturgeon from which eggs are taken must be kept. The cutting or mutilation of paddlefish to check for eggs is prohibited except that a stainless steel 12-gauge needle may be inserted into the abdomen between the pectoral and pelvic fins to determine the presence of eggs. This needle and syringe device must be on board every roe fishing vessel and kept in a sanitary manner. A 2-inch portion of ovary must remain in each harvested paddlefish while on the water or immediately adjacent to the water where harvested. Paddlefish eggs removed from the fish must be kept in separate containers - eggs from one fish only per container. Shovelnose sturgeon must remain whole and the eggs must remain in each harvested shovelnose sturgeon while on the water or immediately adjacent to the water where harvested. Paddlefish may not be kept alive except for permitted aquaculture purposes.

TURTLE REGULATIONS

Licenses and Permits – A commercial fisher with a valid Commercial Fishing License and a valid Commercial Turtle Permit must be present to commercially harvest turtles from the waters of the state. Commercial fishers can obtain a free Commercial Turtle Permit from TWRA by written request.

Minimum Size Limits – Only the Common Snapping Turtle, *Chelydra serpentina serpentina*, with a carapace (upper shell) length of at least (12) twelve inches, measured front to back, may be taken year-round and statewide without limit by any legal commercial fishing method.

Other Regulations – Only at Reelfoot Wildlife Management Area, all sizes and species of turtles except the box turtle and those classified as endangered, threatened, or in need of management as proclaimed by the Wildlife Resources Commission, may be taken by any legal commercial fishing method.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Commercial fishers are required to provide TWRA with requested information and samples for all fish or turtles (or parts thereof) which they harvest from Tennessee waters or import into Tennessee. Wholesale fish dealers are required to provide TWRA with requested information and samples for all fish or turtles (or parts thereof) which they receive from commercial fishers, wholesale fish dealers, or nonresident equivalents. Requested information must be reported on forms provided by TWRA. Commercial fishers and wholesale fish dealers must contact the Fisheries Management Division at (615) 781-6575 within 5 days upon purchasing a license and request the required forms. There are four reports that TWRA requires:

1. **Monthly Commercial Fishing Report** – This report must be completed daily (within 24 hours of harvest) by all commercial fishing license holders and submitted to TWRA by the commercial fisher at the end of the month. Commercial fishers must notify TWRA on a Monthly Commercial Fishing Report form if they did not harvest fish or turtles (or parts thereof) during a month. Complete commercial fishing reporting instructions can be found on the front cover of the Monthly Commercial Fishing Report.
2. **Daily Commercial Roe Fish Harvest Receipt** – This is a supplemental form for roe fish (paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, and bowfin) harvest that must be completed from October through May by Commercial Roe Fish Permit holders in addition to their Monthly Commercial Fishing Reports. This receipt must be completed by the commercial fisher within 24 hours of harvest and submitted to TWRA by the commercial roe fisher at the end of the month. Commercial fishers must notify TWRA on a Daily Commercial Roe Fish Harvest Receipt if they did not harvest roe fish during a month from October through May. Wholesale fish dealers must sign, date, and indicate the quantity of roe fish products that they receive from a commercial roe fisher on a Daily Commercial Roe Fish Harvest Receipt (provided by the commercial fisher) within 24 hours of receiving the product. Wholesale fish dealers must satisfy the commercial fishing reporting requirements as instructed by TWRA for nonresidents who supply them with roe fish products harvested out-of-state. For complete commercial roe fish harvest reporting instructions contact the Fisheries Management Division and request the instruction booklet titled: “Instructions for Completing the Daily Commercial Roe Fish Harvest Receipt.”
3. **Monthly Commercial Fishing Turtle Harvest Data Form** – This is a supplemental form for turtle harvest from Reelfoot Lake and must be completed monthly by Commercial Turtle Permit Holders in addition to the Monthly Commercial Fishing Report. For complete commercial turtle harvest reporting instructions contact the Fisheries Management Division and request the instruction booklet titled: “Instructions for Completing the Monthly Commercial Fishing Turtle Harvest Data Form.”

4. **Wholesale Fish Dealer Report** – This is a monthly form that must be completed and submitted by the wholesale fish dealer. Wholesale fish dealers must notify TWRA on a Wholesale Fish Dealer Report form if they did not receive fish or turtles (or parts thereof) during a month. For complete wholesale fish dealer reporting instructions contact the Fisheries Management Division and request the instruction booklet titled: “Instructions for Completing the Wholesale Fish Dealer Report.”

All daily receipts and monthly reports must be submitted to TWRA by the 15th of the month following the month which is being reported. Example: All daily receipts and monthly report forms for fish or turtles harvested/received in July are due to TWRA by August 15.

Commercial fishers and wholesale fish dealers must retain a copy of all receipts and forms for a period of two years, and make them available for inspection by TWRA.

Wholesale fish dealers, commercial fishers, private individuals, and businesses importing or exporting commercial fish or turtles (or parts thereof) into or out of Tennessee must have bills of lading denoting the quantity of product, name and address of supplier, name of water body from which product was harvested, and date of import/export. A copy of the bill of lading must be in the possession of the person importing or exporting the product. Commercial fishers must retain a copy of each bill of lading for a period of two years, and make it available for inspection by TWRA.

TWRA CONTACT INFORMATION

CENTRAL OFFICE

Ellington Agricultural Center

P.O. Box 40747

Nashville, TN 37204

Fisheries Management Division: (615) 781-6575

Law Enforcement Division: (615) 781-6580

License Section: (615) 781-6585

TWRA Fisheries Management Website: <http://www.state.tn.us/twra/fish/fishmain.html>

REGION I

200 Lowell Thomas Drive

Jackson, TN 38301

(731) 423-5725

Toll Free (800) 372-3928

REGION II

Ellington Agricultural Center

P.O. Box 41489

Nashville, TN 37204

(615) 781-6622

Toll Free (800) 624-7406

REGION III

464 Industrial Blvd.

Crossville, TN 38555

(931) 484-9571

Toll Free (800) 262-6704

REGION IV

3030 Wildlife Way

Morristown, TN 37814

(423) 587-7037

Toll Free (800) 332-0900

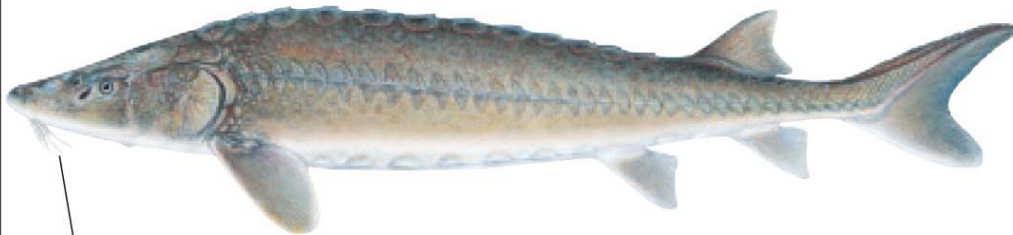
Help Protect Tennessee's Endangered Sturgeon

Tennessee's big rivers are home to three species of sturgeon: shovelnose sturgeon, pallid sturgeon and lake sturgeon. ***Two of these species, the pallid and lake sturgeon, are endangered and protected by law.*** Pallid and lake sturgeon are illegal to possess and must be returned to the water unharmed, immediately after being caught.

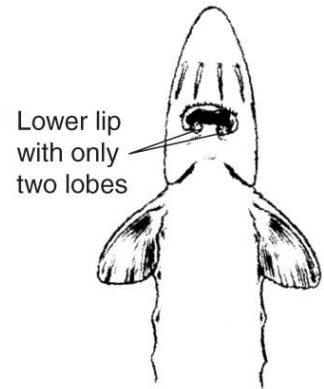
How can you help protect pallid and lake sturgeon?

1. Know your sturgeon! All three species of sturgeon are similar in appearance, especially the pallid sturgeon and the shovelnose sturgeon. Learn how to distinguish the three species from one another (see diagram below).
2. Report your catch or sightings of pallid and lake sturgeon to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

LAKE STURGEON – Can live up to 150 years, reach 8 feet in length and weigh 300 pounds



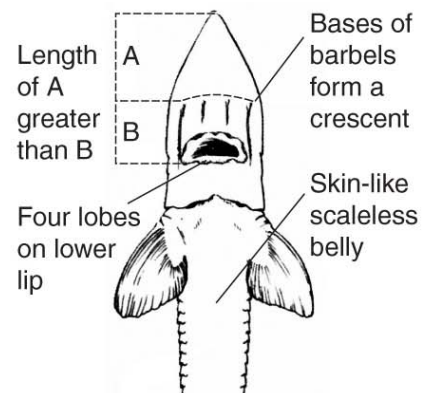
Barbels smooth, not fringed or serrated-looking
Dark brown or slate-colored



PALLID STURGEON – Can live more than 90 years, reach 5 feet in length and weigh 65 pounds



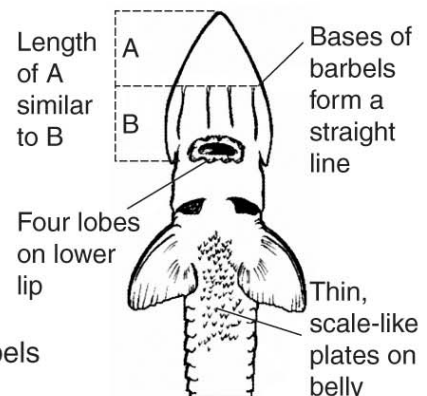
Inner two barbels thinner and much shorter than outer barbels
Barbels fringed or serrated-looking



SHOVELNOSE STURGEON – Can live more than 20 years and seldom exceed 30 inches in length or a weight of 5 pounds



Inner two barbels similar in thickness and nearly as long as outer barbels
Barbels fringed or serrated-looking



Tennessee's Lake Sturgeon Program

Since 2000, more than 50,000 lake sturgeon have been stocked into the French Broad and Holston rivers near Knoxville. Lake sturgeon were also stocked into Cheatham Reservoir on the Cumberland River at Nashville in 2006. These stockings are part of a long-term program designed to restore this primitive fish to its native waters in Tennessee. Ultimately, if the program succeeds, TWRA will be able to allow a managed sport fishery for these enormous fish, capable of living up to 150 years, reaching eight feet in length, and weighing 300 pounds.

Angler reports are important to TWRA because they provide important movement and growth information needed to monitor the success of the program. These fish can travel long distances from their release point, so anglers could possibly catch a lake sturgeon in nearly any river or reservoir.

If you catch a lake sturgeon, please be as careful as pos-

sible not to harm the fish - avoid holding lake sturgeon by their tails and remember that fish cannot breathe out of the water. ***Lake sturgeon are endangered in Tennessee and should be released immediately.*** Note an approximate length before the fish is released. TWRA would appreciate a picture of your catch but only if you can take it immediately, as you release the fish. In appreciation of your report, TWRA will issue you a Lake Sturgeon Certificate (below) that features an illustration by renowned wildlife artist Joseph R. Tomelleri.

If you catch a lake sturgeon please call the toll free number for your regional office (see inside cover of this fishing guide) or the Fish Management Division at (615) 781-6575. You will be asked to provide your name, address, and phone number and the following information about your catch: when and where you caught it, an approximate length, and what you were using for bait.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION



The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency acknowledges

for reporting the catch and release of a Lake Sturgeon.

Date: _____ Length: _____

Location: _____

Certificate Number: _____

Bill Reeves
Chief, Fisheries Management Division